

JACK AND THE BEANSTALK

Once upon a time there was a boy named Jack. Jack lived with his mother in a little cottage in the countryside. They were very poor as Jack's father had died when Jack was a baby. Jack's mother grew vegetables in a garden and they had a cow which provided them with milk. However, soon they had no money to buy hay to feed the cow. Sadly Jack's mother decided to sell the cow.

"Take the cow into town and sell her," she commanded Jack. "Make sure you get a good price as she is an excellent provider of milk."

She put a rope around the cow's neck, handed it to Jack and watched as he headed down the road.

Jack had gone half the distance to town when he met a man.

"Where are you going with that cow?" asked the man.

"I am taking the cow into town to sell her," he replied.

The man looked the cow over and held out his hand to Jack.

"I will give you these magic beans in exchange for the cow," he offered.

The beans were bright and shiny and many different colors. Jack was amazed!

"What do the beans do?" he asked.

"They are magic beans! Replied the man. "Just plant them in your garden and you will grow the biggest vegetables ever! You will never be hungry again!" he exclaimed.

Jack hesitated for just an instant but he was unable to resist the shiny beans.

"Okay. It's a deal," said Jack and handed the rope with the cow to the man.

The man put the beans into a small pouch and handed them to Jack.

Jack was so excited he ran all the way back home, the pouch with the beans clutched tightly in his hand. His mother was surprised to see him back so soon.

"Did you sell the cow already? You have hardly been gone long enough to get to town let alone come back so soon," she exclaimed.

"I did not have to go all the way to town," explained Jack. "I met a man halfway down the road and he bought the cow."

"Well, how much did you get?" she asked. "Give me the money."

Jack held out the pouch to his mother.

"I did not get any money," he said. "I traded the cow for these magic beans!" he exclaimed.

"Magic beans?" she puzzled as he dumped the contents of the pouch into her hand.

The beans were no longer shiny but just looked like ordinary beans.

"You stupid boy!" she yelled. "You traded our cow for a handful of ordinary beans. Now we shall starve for sure."

She was so angry that she tossed the beans out of the window and into the garden. That night Jack cried himself to sleep.

The next day Jack awoke early. He decided he would try to go out and find a job. He quickly dressed and crept outside. How surprised he was when he started past the garden! There grew the largest beanstalk that Jack had ever seen. It was so big around that he could not encircle it with his arms and it was so tall that it grew up into the clouds and he could not even see the top. He quickly ran into the cottage to inform his mother who was just as surprised

as Jack. Indeed the beans must have been magic after all!

"I will climb the beanstalk to see where it will take me," said Jack.

"Be careful," his mother admonished, "and do not be gone too long."

Jack gave his mother a kiss and promised to be back soon. He then began to climb the beanstalk. His mother watched until he disappeared through the clouds. It seemed to Jack that he was climbing for a long time. He was growing weary when all at once the clouds opened up and there was a road before him. He hopped off of the beanstalk and trotted down the road. By and by he came to an astonishing sight! There before him stood a grand castle as high as the eye could see.

"Who would live in such a huge castle?" thought Jack.

When Jack approached the castle, the door stood ajar so Jack was able to slip inside to have a look around. He was amazed to see such large furniture. There was an extra large table and chairs with cups and saucers which were almost as big as Jack! All at once he felt and heard the boom, boom, boom of heavy footsteps. Jack looked around and saw a broom standing in the corner. Quickly he jumped behind its large bristles and hid. All at once Jack saw a giant of a man walk into the room.

"Fe, fi, fo, fum! I smell the blood of an Englishman!" shouted the giant.

With that Jack pushed himself a little further behind the broom.

The giant then called to his servant, "I am hungry."

"Bring me some food," he demanded.

Soon the servant had cooked up a huge dinner of roast beef, gravy, and mashed potatoes. The giant ate all of it and called for his dessert. After a large bowl of pudding, the giant was quite satisfied.

Again he called his servant. "Bring me my goose," he commanded.

Soon the servant returned with a cage. Inside the cage was a beautiful white goose. The giant took the goose out of the cage.

"Lay," he commanded.

The goose immediately laid an egg. But this egg was no ordinary egg. This egg was made of gold! Each time the giant commanded the goose to lay, she produced a golden egg.

Again the giant call his servant. "Bring me my money bag," he commanded.

When the servant returned, he pushed a cart with a huge money bag on it. The giant placed the bag on the table and opened the tie. He turned it over and out spilled hundreds of coins. The giant began counting the coins. This took some time as there were so many of them. Then the giant put the coins back into the bag along with the golden eggs. After all of this activity, the giant was quite weary. He soon fell asleep on his chair and was snoring quite loudly.

Jack quietly left his hiding place and climbed up onto the table. He crept over to the cage which held the beautiful goose. Quickly he unlatched the door, reached in and grabbed the goose. He anxiously slid down the table leg and began to creep toward the door. It was at that moment that the goose let out a loud squawk. Jack tried to calm the goose but she only honked louder. With all this commotion the giant soon awoke. He spied Jack with the goose in his arms.

"Fe, fi, fo, fum! I smell the blood of an Englishman!" he shouted. "Who is it that is trying to steal my goose?" he commanded.

Jack was so scared that he turned and ran out of the door as fast as he could. But it was not long before the giant was following him.

"Stop, thief!" he yelled.

But Jack, still holding onto the goose, kept running as fast as he could until he came once again to the beanstalk. He jumped onto the branches and climbed down as quickly as he could. The giant saw where Jack had gone and did not hesitate to jump onto the beanstalk. It swayed under his heavy weight. As Jack neared the bottom, he called out to his mother.

“Quick, bring me the ax,” he yelled.

When Jack finally reached the bottom, his mother was there with the ax. Jack looked up and saw the giant coming down the beanstalk. Then he took the ax and began to chop the beanstalk with all his might. After several blows the beanstalk gave way and down tumbled the mighty giant. He hit the ground so hard that he sunk right down into the earth and was never seen again!

Jack told his mother of his adventures in the giant's castle and then showed her the beautiful goose. When Jack commanded the goose to lay, she produced a beautiful golden egg. Jack was able to sell the golden egg for enough money to take care of his mother and himself for the rest of their lives and they all lived happily ever after.

The End